

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **FEDERAL JURY IN TUCSON CONVICTS TWO MEN CONVICTED OF POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE MARIJUANA**

**TUCSON, ARIZONA** -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on July 15, 2003, Fernando Palomares-Parra, DOB 5/30/75, of Tucson, Arizona, and Jose Araiza-Sotomayer, DOB 9-17-74, of Obregon, Sonora, Mexico, were found guilty of possession with intent to distribute 550 lbs of marijuana for distribution in violation of Title 21 U.S.C. Section 841 and of conspiracy to do the same in violation of Title 21 U.S.C. Section 846 by a federal jury in Tucson, Arizona. Fernando Palomares-Parra was also found guilty of establishment of manufacturing operations which is to manage or control any building as a owner, lessee, agent, employee, or mortgagee knowing it will be used for the unlawful manufacture of a controlled substance in violation of Title 21 U.S.C. Section 856.

The evidence at trial showed on January 14, 2003 undercover Customs agents established surveillance at a Home Depot Store in Tucson Arizona. They observed Jose Araiza-Sotomayer and another individual purchase several thousand feet of stretch wrap and contact paper. The agents followed them to

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a stash house belonging to Fernando Palomares-Parra, where the agents set up surveillance. After a couple hours, Fernando Palomares-Parra and another man left the house. The agents immediately approached and spoke to Jose Araiza-Sotomayer. Jose Araiza-Sotomayer claimed to be the tenant and gave the officers oral and written consent to search the premises. The officers found an empty house with no furniture, food or clothing, but containing 550 pounds of marijuana, a 9 mm loaded Smith and Wesson Pistol on a sleeping bag, and an electronic scale.

The defendants Fernando Palomares-Parra and Jose Araiza-Sotomayer are being held in custody for sentencing. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Roll on July 8 through 15, 2003..

A conviction for possession of more than 100 kilograms of marijuana for distribution and conspiracy to do the same carry a maximum penalties of 40 years or a \$ 2,000,000.00 fine or both. A conviction for establishment of manufacturing operations carries a maximum penalty of 20 years or a fine of not more than \$500,000.00 or both.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, formerly known as United States Customs.

Sentencing is set before Judge Roll on October 20, 2003..

The prosecution is being handled by David Paul Flannigan, Assistant United State Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER : CR-03-0279TUC  
RELEASE NUMBER : 2003-124

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